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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/837,505	04/18/2001	Hongyi Zhou	EGS10130US	7923

30781 7590 04/19/2006

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EXAMINER

CHOUDHURY, AZIZUL Q

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2145

DATE MAILED: 04/19/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/837,505

Applicant(s)

HONGYI ZHOU

Examiner

Azizul Choudhury

Art Unit

2145

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 January 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 5-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 5-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 April 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____.

Detailed Action

This office action is in response to the correspondence received on January 30, 2006.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3 and 5-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dickinson (US Patent No: 5,640,565) in view of Tripp et al (US Patent No: 6,983,322), hereafter referred to as Dickinson and Tripp, respectively.

1. With regards to claim 1, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems of personal and business web cards, comprising a plurality of servers with which users may sign up to keep their contact information and through which the users may search others' contact information, each of said servers having at least a database and a search engine, and having at least one uniform search interface, wherein at least two of said servers are equipped with at least one interface having protocols established to connect with each other, and when a user places a search inquiry at a first server local to the user, the inquiry is simultaneously forwarded to one or more other servers having the same protocols established with the first server so that any search inquiry is performed not only at the first server but also

simultaneously at said one or more other servers (Dickinson teaches a design for electronic business cards for use in a network environment (column 2, lines 20-44, Dickinson). It allows for users to browse (search) for business cards (column 7, line 49 – column 8, line 28, Dickinson). This includes attaining a business card from another computer on the network and not local to the user. Since the computers are able to communicate with one another, it means that the design allows for the computers to follow (but is not limited to) the same protocols. In addition, the design allows for an agreed upon search method, hence equivalent to the claimed uniform search interface. Furthermore, each of the workstations are equivalent to servers and since they have storage means, they are also equivalent to databases. Plus, Dickinson's design allows for central stores which function as large databases for business cards (column 5, lines 15-27, Dickinson). However, Dickinson does not disclose the inquiry being performed simultaneously.

In the same field of endeavor, Tripp teaches a web based search design. The design permits for simultaneous searches (claim 11, Tripp). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Dickinson with those of Tripp, to provide user services like account registration and search capabilities (column 8, lines 61-62, Tripp)).

2. With regards to claim 2, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of personal and business web cards, comprising a plurality of servers with which users may sign up to keep their contact information and through which the users may search others'

contact information, each of said servers having at least a database and a search engine, and having at least one uniform search interface, wherein one of said servers is pre-assigned as a master server and is equipped with at least one interface having protocols established to connect with said other servers as slave servers, and the pre-assigned master server is capable of transmitting any search inquiry to one or more designated slave servers (Dickinson teaches a design for electronic business cards for use in a network environment (column 2, lines 20-44, Dickinson). It allows for users to browse (search) for business cards (column 7, line 49 – column 8, line 28, Dickinson). This includes attaining a business card from another computer on the network and not local to the user. Since the computers are able to communicate with one another, it means that the design allows for the computers to follow (but is not limited to) the same protocols. In addition, the design allows for an agreed upon search method, hence equivalent to the claimed uniform search interface. Furthermore, each of the workstations are equivalent to servers and since they have storage means, they are also equivalent to databases. Plus, Dickinson's design allows for central stores which function as large databases for business cards (column 5, lines 15-27, Dickinson). However, Dickinson does not disclose the master server being pre-assigned.

In the same field of endeavor, Tripp teaches a web based search design. The design permits for master servers (column 5, lines 61-67, Tripp). The assignment of the master servers does not change once the design is implemented and hence, the master servers are pre-assigned. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one

skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Dickinson with those of Tripp, to provide user services like account registration and search capabilities (column 8, lines 61-62, Tripp)).

3. With regards to claim 3, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems, wherein said pre-assigned master server is capable of passing on any updates that a user placed at one of servers to designated servers (Dickinson's design allows for the use of one of many protocols, including TCP/IP for network communicating (column 5, line 56 – column 6, line 3, Dickinson). In addition, Dickinson's design uses a master host (column 9, lines 55-67, Dickinson). Furthermore, Dickinson's design allows for updated information to be transferred as claimed (column 7, line 48 – column 8, line 26, Dickinson). However, Dickinson does not disclose the master server being pre-assigned.

In the same field of endeavor, Tripp teaches a web-based search design. The design permits for master servers (column 5, lines 61-67, Tripp). The assignment of the master servers does not change once the design is implemented and hence, the master servers are pre-assigned. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Dickinson with those of Tripp, to provide user services like account registration and search capabilities (column 8, lines 61-62, Tripp)).

4. With regards to claims 5 and 20, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems, wherein said servers communicate with each other through a reciprocal uniform search interface with predetermined protocols between said servers (As stated before, Dickinson's design allows for protocols to be followed by the computers in the network. As in all networks, protocols must be followed for devices to communicate with one another. In Dickinson's design, one such protocol is the TCP/IP protocol (column 5, line 56 – column 6, line 3, Dickinson). Since protocols must be used, and that the business cards are of the same format throughout the network, it is inherent that the search interface must be uniform in Dickinson's design as claimed).
5. With regards to claims 6 and 21, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems, wherein said predetermined protocols are of a uniform operative language (As stated earlier, Dickinson's design allows for the use of TCP/IP (column 5, line 56 – column 6, line 3, Dickinson). It is inherent that all the devices within the network communicate in a uniform protocol language as claimed for their communication to operate properly).
6. With regards to claims 7 and 22, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems wherein each of said predetermined protocols is operative at least between two of said servers in consideration of the operative languages of said two servers (As stated earlier, Dickinson's design allows for the use of TCP/IP (column 5, line 56

– column 6, line 3, Dickinson) on devices, such as servers, within its network. It is inherent that all the devices within the network communicate in an agreed upon protocol as claimed so that the devices know how to communicate with one another).

7. With regards to claims 8 and 23, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems, wherein said predetermined protocols of said servers are operated in Unicode that has correspondence with other Unicode of different languages (Unicode is simply a standard text involving 16 bits as opposed to the 8 bits used by ASCII. Dickinson's design requires the use of text and hence a standard must be used and no limitation is placed as to the type of text standard usable. Hence, Unicode is an acceptable text standard for Dickinson's design).
8. With regards to claims 9 and 24, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems, wherein said protocols of the interface are capable of transforming a search inquiry placed in a language into other operative languages and thus transmitting the search inquiry to other servers (Dickinson's design provides support for multiple protocols so that different networks are able to communicate (column 6, line 1, Dickinson) (column 8, lines 57-67, Dickinson)).
9. With regards to claims 10 and 25, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems, wherein said protocols of the interface are capable of transforming a

search result into the language corresponding to the language of the search inquiry, and thus transmitting the result back to the server placing the search inquiry (Dickinson's design provides support for multiple protocols so that different networks are able to communicate with each other (column 6, line 1, Dickinson) (column 8, lines 57-67, Dickinson)).

10. With regards to claim 11, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems, wherein said pre-assigned master server has automatic synchronization function to transmit updates to all designated servers whenever an update occurs (Dickinson's design uses a master host (column 9, line 57, Dickinson) in a system that allows for synchronization upon request (column 9, lines 24-32, Dickinson). However, Dickinson does not disclose the master server being pre-assigned.

In the same field of endeavor, Tripp teaches a web based search design. The design permits for master servers (column 5, lines 61-67, Tripp). The assignment of the master servers does not change once the design is implemented and hence, the master servers are pre-assigned. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Dickinson with those of Tripp, to provide user services like account registration and search capabilities (column 8, lines 61-62, Tripp)).

11. With regards to claim 12, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a method of managing and controlling a network of systems of personal and business web cards, each of

said systems including at least a web card server having at least a search engine and a database, said method comprising connecting a plurality of web card servers through the Internet; establishing at least a protocol between two of said servers to enable communication between them including transmission of search inquiries therebetween; installing said protocols, respectively, in at least two of said servers that communicate with each other; identifying said protocol between the servers to establish connection and communication therebetween; and transmitting any of said search inquiries and web card information between at least two of said connected servers so that any of said search inquiries is simultaneously performed not only at the server where the inquiry is placed, but simultaneously also at least one of the other servers (Dickinson teaches a design for electronic business cards for use in a network environment (column 2, lines 20-44, Dickinson). It allows for users to browse (search) for business cards (column 7, line 49 – column 8, line 28, Dickinson). This includes attaining a business card from another computer on the network and not local to the user. Since the computers are able to communicate with one another, it means that the design allows for the computers to follow (but is not limited to) the same protocols. In addition, the design allows for an agreed upon search method, hence equivalent to the claimed uniform search interface. Furthermore, each of the workstations are equivalent to servers and since they have storage means, they are also equivalent to databases. Plus, Dickinson's design allows for central stores which function as large databases for business cards

(column 5, lines 15-27, Dickinson). However, Dickinson does not disclose the inquiry being performed simultaneously.

In the same field of endeavor, Tripp teaches a web based search design. The design permits for simultaneous searches (claim 11, Tripp). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Dickinson with those of Tripp, to provide user services like account registration and search capabilities (column 8, lines 61-62, Tripp)).

12. With regards to claim 13, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a method, further comprising pre-assigning at least one of said web card servers as master server, and installing said protocols in said pre-assigned master server such that the master server is capable of communicating with all of said servers and transmitting any of said search inquiries and web card information among the servers, including any update of said web card information (Dickinson's design allows for master hosts (column 9, line 57, Dickinson). Dickinson's design also allows for synchronization and updating of business cards (column 9, lines 24-32, Dickinson). In addition, the design provides support for multiple protocols so that different networks are able to communicate (column 6, line 1, Dickinson) (column 8, lines 57-67, Dickinson). Furthermore, Dickinson's design allows for searches as claimed (column 7, line 49 – column 8, line 28, Dickinson). However, Dickinson does not disclose the master server being pre-assigned.

In the same field of endeavor, Tripp teaches a web based search design. The design permits for master servers (column 5, lines 61-67, Tripp). The assignment of the master servers does not change once the design is implemented and hence, the master servers are pre-assigned. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Dickinson with those of Tripp, to provide user services like account registration and search capabilities (column 8, lines 61-62, Tripp)).

13. With regards to claim 14, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a method, further comprising pre-assigned one master server for a particular region, and having all of pre-assigned master servers installed with pertinent protocols that enable communication between said master servers and transmission of web card information and search inquires among said master servers (Dickinson's design provides support for multiple protocols so that different networks are able to communicate with each other (column 6, line 1, Dickinson) (column 8, lines 57-67, Dickinson)). However, Dickinson does not disclose the master server being pre-assigned.

In the same field of endeavor, Tripp teaches a web based search design. The design permits for master servers (column 5, lines 61-67, Tripp). The assignment of the master servers does not change once the design is implemented and hence, the master servers are pre-assigned. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of

Dickinson with those of Tripp, to provide user services like account registration and search capabilities (column 8, lines 61-62, Tripp)).

14. With regards to claim 15, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a method wherein each of said master servers are capable of flashing an update that occurs within a corresponding system of personal information web card, and transmitting such an update to other master servers having designated users, that in turn transmits the update to the designated user so as to synchronize all personal information data files of all designated users (Dickinson's design allows for synchronization and updating of business cards (column 9, lines 24-32, Dickinson)).

15. With regards to claim 16, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a method, wherein said protocol is operative in a uniform Unicode corresponding to Unicode of different languages (Unicode is simply a standard text involving 16 bits as opposed to the 8 bits used by ASCII. Dickinson's design requires the use of text and hence a standard must be used and no limitation is placed as to the type of text standard usable. Hence, Unicode is an acceptable text standard for Dickinson's design).

16. With regards to claim 17, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems, wherein the user can designate, in the inquiry, a particular set of said servers that have protocols established with the first servers (Dickinson's design allows users to

access and edit cards as well as utilize cards within a collaboration (column 9, lines 2-4, Dickinson)).

17. With regards to claim 18, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems of personal and business web cards, comprising a plurality of servers with which users may sign up to keep their contact information and through which the users may search others' contact information, each of said servers having at least a database and a search engine, and having at least one uniform search interface, wherein said servers are divided into groups such that each group comprises a pre-assigned master server and one or more slave servers, and within each group the pre-assigned master server is equipped with at least one interface having protocols established to connect with the slave servers within the same group, and is capable of transmitting a search inquiry to one or more designated slave servers, and wherein the pre-assigned master servers are equipped with at least one interface having protocols established to communicate with at least one of the other pre-assigned master servers such that a search inquiry can be transmitted among the master servers (Dickinson teaches a design for electronic business cards for use in a network environment (column 2, lines 20-44, Dickinson). It allows for users to browse (search) for business cards (column 7, line 49 – column 8, line 28, Dickinson). This includes attaining a business card from another computer on the network and not local to the user. Since the computers are able to communicate with one another, it means that the design allows for the computers to follow (but is

not limited to) the same protocols. In addition, the design allows for an agreed upon search method, hence equivalent to the claimed uniform search interface.

Furthermore, each of the workstations are equivalent to servers and since they have storage means, they are also equivalent to databases. Plus, Dickinson's design allows for central stores which function as large databases for business cards (column 5, lines 15-27, Dickinson). However, Dickinson does not disclose the master server being pre-assigned.

In the same field of endeavor, Tripp teaches a web based search design. The design permits for master servers (column 5, lines 61-67, Tripp). The assignment of the master servers does not change once the design is implemented and hence, the master servers are pre-assigned. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Dickinson with those of Tripp, to provide user services like account registration and search capabilities (column 8, lines 61-62, Tripp)).

18. With regards to claim 19, Dickinson teaches through Tripp, a network of systems, wherein each of the pre-assigned master servers is capable of transmitting an update to the slave servers within the same group and other pre-assigned master servers (Dickinson's design allows for the use of one of many protocols, including TCP/IP for network communicating (column 5, line 56 – column 6, line 3, Dickinson). In addition, Dickinson's design uses a master host (column 9, lines 55-67,

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Dickinson). Furthermore, Dickinson's design allows for updated information to be transferred as claimed (column 7, line 48 – column 8, line 26, Dickinson)).

Response to Remarks

The amendment received on January 30, 2006 has been carefully examined but is not deemed fully persuasive. The claim amendments succeeded in claiming limitations not disclosed within the Dickinson prior art. However, upon further search and examination, the Tripp prior art was found to teach the newly claimed traits within the same field of endeavor.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Azizul Choudhury whose telephone number is (571) 272-3909. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jason Cardone can be reached on (571) 272-3933. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

AC


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